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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 11/20/07

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ARTICLES:

(1) Japan-ASEAN reach settlement on EPA to be put into effect next fall: Tariff on flat-screen TV to be abolished over 10 years

November 20, 2007

Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) at an economic ministerial meeting yesterday reached an agreement to sign an economic partnership agreement (EPA) featuring trade liberalization. The agreement is expected to be put into effect next fall. This is Japan's first EPA with a regional association, which will bring about a wide-area economic bloc since ASEAN countries have a total population of about 550 million.

Japan's trade with ASEAN in 2006 reached approximately 156.3 billion dollars or approximately 17.2 trillion yen, accounting for about 13 PERCENT of the nation's entire trade amount. According to the envisaged EPA, Japan will immediately abolish tariffs on more than 90 PERCENT of imports from ASEAN, and ASEAN will scrap tariffs on more than 85 PERCENT of imports from Japan over 10-18 years. For instance, tariffs on flat-screen TV will be scrapped in seven ASEAN member nations within 10 years, which would make it easier for Japanese companies to manufacture products based on the division of labor.

In the East Asia region, moves to sign EPAs and free trade agreements (FTA) are gathering momentum with focus on ASEAN. Individual agreements between ASEAN, and countries like Japan, China, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand, will be put into effect next year.

Japan has advocated an East Asia EPA (ASEAN plus Japan, China and South Korea, plus Australia and New Zealand) putting together all those EPAS. The result of studies on its proposal will likely be reported at the East Asia summit next year along with an ASEAN plus 3 (Japan, China and South Korea) EPA advocated by China. Discussions

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on the future image of an East Asia economic bloc will thus move into full swing. The East Asia EPA initiative is also aimed at softening China's influence.

However, it is noteworthy that ASEAN has not necessarily been positive toward the idea of signing an EPA. Since its members have different levels of the economies and different religions and cultures, it lacks cooperativeness like the EU has. The EPA talks with ASEAN have followed a thorny path with member nations' motivated by the desire to keep tariffs high in order to give priority to inviting investors to their own countries instead of within the region.

ASEAN member nations expect Japan to liberalize its agricultural market, invest in their countries and transfer technology to them. Japan's ability to construct a cooperative system involving the private sector will be put to the test.

"It is almost impossible for Doha Round to reach a settlement within the year," says METI minister during WTO talks

Singapore, Yusuke Murayama

Commenting on the possibility of the multilateral trade negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) reaching a settlement within the year, Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Amari during a press conference yesterday evening said, "It is almost impossible by any stretch of the imagination." He also indicated an outlook that a ministerial meeting, a premise for reaching an agreement, will be delayed until immediately after the World Economic Forum Annual Plenary Session (Davos Conference) to be held in Switzerland in late January next year.

(2) ASEAN summit: ASEAN looking forward to new Fukuda Doctrine

SANKEI (Page 7) (Full)  
November 20, 2007

Kinya Fujimoto, Singapore

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has initiated a series of events for its summit meeting, holding an informal dinner

party in Singapore. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda will attend the East Asia summit tomorrow. It has been 30 years since the late Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda, the father of Yasuo, advocated the so-called Fukuda Doctrine, in which he articulated Japan's foreign policy toward Southeast Asia. Among ASEAN member countries, the Fukuda Doctrine has been highly appreciated, citing that it became the foundation for them to build a relationship of trust with Japan. There is a view calling for a second Fukuda doctrine that would meet the needs of the new era.

The Straits Time, a Singaporean daily newspaper, stated in a commentary on Nov. 16 that Prime Minister Fukuda's foreign policy toward Asia, would be similar to that of his father Takeo, who was regarded as a friend of Asia, in particular ASEAN. All ASEAN member countries are welcoming Fukuda's first official visit to Singapore.

The Fukuda Doctrine, which was asserted by the late Japanese prime minister in 1977 in Manila, included three principles for Japan's Southeast Asia foreign policy: 1) Japan would never become a military power and would contribute to Southeast Asian and world

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peace; 2) Japan would build up relationship of mutual confidence and trust with Southeast Asian countries; and 3) Japan on equal footing would contribute to peace and prosperity of South East Asian countries.

The Fukuda Doctrine was meant to repair the bad image that Japan then held in Asia.

In 1974, then Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka faced anti-Japanese crowds in Bangkok and Jakarta who were defiantly against Japanese companies' unilateral investment in Southeast Asia.

Former Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan, in a symposium held in Singapore this month commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Fukuda Doctrine, stated: "Up to that time, Japan conducted its foreign policy only for the sake of its economy." He gave a positive assessment of the Fukuda Doctrine, saying:

"Because successive cabinets in Japan since 1977 have continued the Fukuda Doctrine, Japan and Southeast Asian countries have been able to share economic and commercial interests, bringing stability to the region."

As concrete achievements, he mentioned Japan's contribution to bringing peace to Cambodia and to resolving the East Timor dispute.

There are also skeptical views. Singapore's Vice Foreign Minister Andrew Tong threw doubt on whether an equal relationship was realized, saying: "Japan's 'checkbook diplomacy' (after the Fukuda Doctrine) has created erroneous thinking among Japanese elites (that Japan only gives aid)"

University of Wisconsin Prof. Jian Wei, who hails from China, pointed out: "The Fukuda Doctrine can also be interpreted as Japan having made a political decision to return from the West to Asia." As long as Japan continues its "US-centered diplomatic strategy," actions by Japan and ASEAN will be constrained and the "Fukuda Doctrine would not be fully implemented," he said.

Surin, a former foreign minister in Thailand who will become ASEAN secretary general next January, stated:

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"Although peace and prosperity were achieved in Southeast Asia as a whole, there are now such new issues as the gap between rich and poor, human rights, and human security."

Former ASEAN Secretary General Seberino (TN: phonetic) said: "Although the Fukuda Doctrine is not outdated, a re-definition is necessary."

In Indonesia in 2004 after he stepped down as chief cabinet secretary, Prime Minister Fukuda commented on the doctrine: "Since

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it is little bit old, we should look into one that has new expressions and policies replacing the old ones."

(3) Editorial: One step toward realization of concept of East Asia Community

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)  
November 20, 2007

Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) finalized negotiation on concluding an economic partnership

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agreement (EPA) yesterday. From a long-term standpoint, this agreement is significant, because the concept of an East Asia Community, which had just been viewed as an account of a dream, has been turned into a future goal.

An EPA includes such sectors as service trade and investment in a free trade agreement (FTA) designed to reduce or abolish tariffs.

Japan has so far concluded FTAs separately with six countries of the 10-nation ASEAN, but the latest one covers the entire region.

China and South Korea have already struck free-trade deals with ASEAN. As a result of Japan joining them, a trilateral economic zone will be established, centered around ASEAN. In addition, if Japan signs FTAs with China and South Korea, and if China and South Korea also concludes an FTA, the framework for the concept of an East Asia Community will be completed.

Of course, it will not be easy to reach the goal. FTA talks between Japan and South Korea have been suspended over the past three years, blocked by such pending issues as Japan's closed rice market and past military aggression. Japan and China have yet to start even negotiations.

Encouraged by the agreement with ASEAN, Japan should move in a positive manner. Countries in East Asia have put their economies on the development track and have served as an engine to pull along the global economy. If they strengthen coordination to establish an economic community, results significant for each nation should be produced.

Tariffs on about 90 PERCENT of imports in terms of value will be gradually repealed after the agreement takes effect. For instance, in case Japan exports liquid crystal panels to Malaysia to make TV sets there and then exports the products to the Philippines, no tariff will be imposed on imports in the entire process.

In the agreement between Japan and ASEAN, however, there are insufficient parts. Japan has put aside rice and dairy products from the application of the accord in order to protect domestic farmers. Thailand and Vietnam have excluded automobiles. Japan has a responsibility to enhance cooperation by opening up its market on its own initiative.

Meanwhile, it is also essential to push ahead with ongoing global trade talks under the World Trade Organization (WTO). But the talks have been stalled as the interests of 150 participant countries are involved in a complicated way. Japan will have to pour its energies in both WTO talks and FTA negotiations.

ASEAN has marked the 40th anniversary of its establishment. The association has steadily taken one step after another toward establishing a common market. Upon successfully dealing with the financial crunch in Asia 10 years ago, the countries have sparked their economies back to life. We feel deeply moved by the fact that ASEAN has reached the stage of moving toward establishing a community.

In the summit today, ASEAN will adopt a charter that will base the establishment of a community. Japan should also be indirectly involved in the process of establishing a community modeled after the European Union (EU) so that progress will be made in the

process.

(4) Female victim rate lower than US rate: US Embassy officer

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 27) (Full)  
November 20, 2007

TOKYO-A group of women, including Hiroko Takahashi, a co-representative of the Ai Josei Kaigi (I Women's Council), formerly the Nihon Fujin Kaigi (Japan Women's Council), and Nobuko Karimata, a member of Okinawa Prefecture's assembly, who chairs the council's Okinawa prefectural headquarters, called at the US Embassy in Japan yesterday and met Security Policy Division Director Raymond Greene at the embassy to protest a recent spate of incidents in which Japanese women were raped, killed, or injured by US servicemen in Japan.

According to Karimata and others, Greene indicated his view, saying the rate of similar incidents in Japan is "lower than that in a certain state of the United States." Those representatives from the council were strongly repulsed by this remark. One of them said, "If there is even a single victim, it is still a problem." Another said, "In sexual violence cases, there are also so many victims who cannot report their cases to police and find themselves helpless."

In Okinawa, a US serviceman's son committed a rape resulting in bodily injury. Moreover, a group of Iwakuni-based US Marines allegedly gang-raped a Japanese woman. Referring to these cases, the council representatives pointed out that there were a number of incidents caused by US servicemen.

(5) Foreign residents worried about how fingerprint data will be used

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)  
November 19, 2007

An increasing number of countries have introduced stricter immigration checks. In Britain, applicants for visas are required to be fingerprinted. Japanese nationals have also been subject to this requirement since early this month. The European Union (EU) has introduced a similar system to Britain's. But there is no other country but Japan and the United States in which almost all visitors are subject to the requirement of fingerprinting. The Justice Ministry dispatched in September its officers to China, Taiwan, and South Korea, from which 60 PERCENT of all foreign visitors to Japan come, to seek understanding of Japan's new system from their travel agencies and press companies.

A sense of resistance is spreading among foreign residents in Japan. In the case of Japan, unlike the US, even foreigners married to Japanese, as well as those with permanent residency, will be subject to the requirement. Groups opposed to the new system have issued statements criticizing it as discriminatory, based on the preconceived notion that foreigners are terrorists.

Collected fingerprints will be put into a database, and the data will also be used in criminal investigations. Some have voiced concern about the government's policy of strengthening the control of foreign residents in Japan, with one person grumbling: "I wonder how the government will use the data."

North Korean and South Korean residents will be excluded from the application of the new system. Faced with strong objections, the government dropped the fingerprinting system under the Alien Registration Law in 2000. This experience is behind the decision to exclude Korean residents. The eldest son of the late Choi Chang Hwa, who launched a campaign against the fingerprinting system, said: "I am disappointed at the resumption of the system only seven years after it was ended. It is strange to require general permanent

residents who have long been deep-seated in Japan to be fingerprinted. I will raise opposition."

#### (6) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:

Nukaga helped Yamagata construction firm take part in bidding for defense-related facilities through Moriya in 2000

Mainichi:

Fund pooled in US by ex-Yamada executive reached 1.1 billion yen

Yomiuri:

LDP, DPJ leaders to hold talks on Nov. 22

Nikkei:

Sumitomo Trust & Banking, Aozora Bank to form comprehensive operational ties

Sankei:

Kyuma vs. Moriya over CX engine procurement

Tokyo Shimbun:

Japan, ASEAN reach agreement on EPA

Akahata:

Nukaga wined and dined by Mitsubishi Group

#### (7) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

(1) Japan-ASEAN EPA agreement: First step toward East Asia Community

(2) Osaka mayoral election: Grand coalition fiasco does not affect election

Mainichi:

(1) Global warming report: Use scientific data for policy

(2) Osaka mayoral election: New mayor must push forward with reform

Yomiuri:

(1) How to eliminate Kasumigaseki's resistance toward decentralization

(2) OPEC supports fight against global warming

Nikkei:

(1) Japan, ASEAN still unhappy with EPA accord

(2) Reform of Osaka City administration indispensable

Sankei:

(1) Fiscal council's proposals: Ruling and opposition camps cannot ease up

(2) We hope Kibo will make new chapter for Japan's space development

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Tokyo Shimbun:

(1) Finance Minister Nukaga's explanations do not make sense

(2) Russia, US, China should join international effort to reduce CO2

Akahata:

(1) Proposals by fiscal system council: Don't prey on common people and rural areas

#### (8) Prime Minister's schedule, November 19

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

November 20, 2007

11:41 Entered his name in the register book to report his return home.

11:59 Met with Vice Defense Minister Masuda at the Prime Minister's

Official Residence (Kantei).

12:24 Met with Deputy Foreign Minister Yabunaka, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director General Sasae and Southeast and Southwest Asian Affairs Director General Atsumi. Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Iwaki was present.

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14:46 Arrived at the official residence.

15:49 Left Haneda Airport on government plane to attend East Asia summit.

Evening Arrived at Singapore International Airport. Stayed overnight at Four Seasons Hotel.

SCHIEFFER